

Appl. No. 10/615,180
Amendment dated: April 6, 2005
Reply to OA of: January 11, 2005

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the allowance of claims 13-19 and the indication that claims 8 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have amended the specification and claims to more particularly define the invention taking into consideration the outstanding Official Action. The specification has been amended to delete "comprising" from the abstract. Accordingly, "comprising" has been deleted and replaced with "including".

Claims 1-12 have been deleted without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants retain all rights to filing a divisional application to the nonelected invention and any cancelled subject matter.

Claims 13-19 are allowed and new claims 20-30 have been added to specific aspects of the invention. Claim 20 corresponds to allowable claim 8 which was dependent and claim 6. Thus since claim 20 is a combination of claim 8 and the base claim from which it depends, claim 20 is allowable as are the claims dependent thereon. This is also true with respect to claim 26 which is a combination of allowable claim 10 and its base claim 6 and the claims dependent thereon. Applicants most respectfully submit that all the claims now present in the application are in full compliance with 35 U.S.C. §112 and are clearly patentable over the references of record.

Reconsideration of the present patent application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

The rejection of claims 6, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being anticipated by the US Patent No. 6,507,049 (Yeager et al.) has been carefully considered but is most respectfully traversed in view of the amendments to the claims.

Applicant has canceled claims 6, 9 and 11 without prejudice or disclaimer thereby obviating this rejection. Accordingly, it is most respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Appl. No. 10/615,180
Amendment dated: April 6, 2005
Reply to OA of: January 11, 2005

The rejection of claims 7 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as obvious over the US Patent No. 6,507,049 to Yeager et al. in view of Suzumura et al. has been carefully considered but is most respectfully traversed in view of the cancellation of these claims and the amendments to the claims restricting the application to the indicated allowable subject matter.

Applicant has canceled claims 7 and 12 without prejudice or disclaimer thereby obviating this rejection. Accordingly, it is most respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

The Examiner indicates that claims 8 and 10 of the present patent application would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, Applicant has rewritten claims 8 and 10 of the present application in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims as new claims 20 to 30.

After the amendment, the claims of the present patent application have been restricted to the allowable subject matter listed on the page 4 of the Office Action dated January 11, 2005. Therefore, reconsideration and allowance of the application are now believed to be in order, and such action is hereby solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

BACON & THOMAS, PLLC

By: 
Richard E. Fichter
Registration No. 26,382

625 Slaters Lane, 4th Fl.
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Phone: (703) 683-0500
Facsimile: (703) 683-1080

REF:kdd
A01.wpd

April 6, 2005